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ISSUE № 215: The Magic Bullet as Signifier of All Things

Fowl Feathered Review is a quarterly, a disordered artifact of the human impulse to categorize and consume the ephemeral. Produced by the Springwound Mammoth Pancake Coalition—an entity distinct from its waffle-centric counterpart—it is birthed under the Fowlpox Press imprint. Virgil Kay, its editor, presides over this enterprise from a paper canoe adrift on the Passagassawakeag, a river of dubious depth and even more dubious inhabitants. Surrounded by featherheads and their aquatic card games, Kay's reign is absolute, his word the final arbiter in the transformation of boastful souls into doormats. Layout and visual conceits are the province of Cookie Granola, while melodrama and histrionics fall under the purview of Childe Harold. Silent Bill, in his characteristically taciturn manner, provides necessary pauses. The review's structural integrity, or lack thereof, is the domain of Unkie Bob, whose talents extend to the mitigation of typographical errors and the prevention of electrical conflagrations. Everett Enótita serves as Kay's indispensable amanuensis, and the Ecum Secum Literary Brain Trust, in a gesture of dubious beneficence, offers nominal financial support. Printed upon the verdant expanse of Bald Porcupine Island, and laced with the enigmatic Kraa, a bioengineered culinary enigma, the Fowl Feathered Review remains a testament to human ingenuity, or perhaps merely a symptom of cultural decline. ISSN: 1929-7238.

"I am an observer of life, a non-participant who takes no sides. I am in the regimented society, but not of it."
--Moondog, The Viking of 6th Avenue

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Fowlpox Press: A Submission Guide for the Determined (or Deluded)

To the Aspiring Artist (or Sandwich Enthusiast):

1. Craft (or Culinary Construct): 2–227 poems, a numerical range that hints at both ambition and a troubling lack of self-editing, may find their way to our digital doorstep (fowlpoxpress@mail2poet.com). Alternatively, for the visually inclined, paintings numbered 2–953 (a prolific career, or perhaps a basement overflowing with forgotten canvases?) are welcome. We are also, inexplicably, open to submissions of twelve-inch sandwiches.
2. Our physical address: 250.5 □ ∞^{11} State Street, Bangor, Maine, 04401.

3. The Gatekeeper: Address your offerings to Virgil Kay, Editor. In posession of remarkably discerning taste, or so he believes, Virgil is a rooster of some renown, a creature of instinct and inexplicable confidence. His title, “China Wok Habitue,” suggests a broader palate than one might expect from a bird, though it’s more likely a testament to the local takeout joint’s generous portions. (Please note: Include a bio, a desperate plea for recognition that will likely join the unread masses in the digital purgatory of our slush pile.)
4. Format: Poems, those valiant attempts at capturing the human experience in meter and rhyme, should be attached in a Word document or PDF. Paintings, windows into your soul (or a weekend spent with Bob Ross reruns), must be submitted in JPEG, TIFF, or a format our aging technology can comprehend. Jokes,

if they exist, should be delivered in MP3 format. We are, alas, not equipped to handle the nuanced art of the live performance. Sandwiches, a curious offering in the realm of artistic expression, require clear plastic wrapping and a small packet of Kewpie Mayonnaise. (Pro-tip: The Kewpie packaging is, undeniably, a work of art in its own right, and we encourage you to admire it before consumption.)

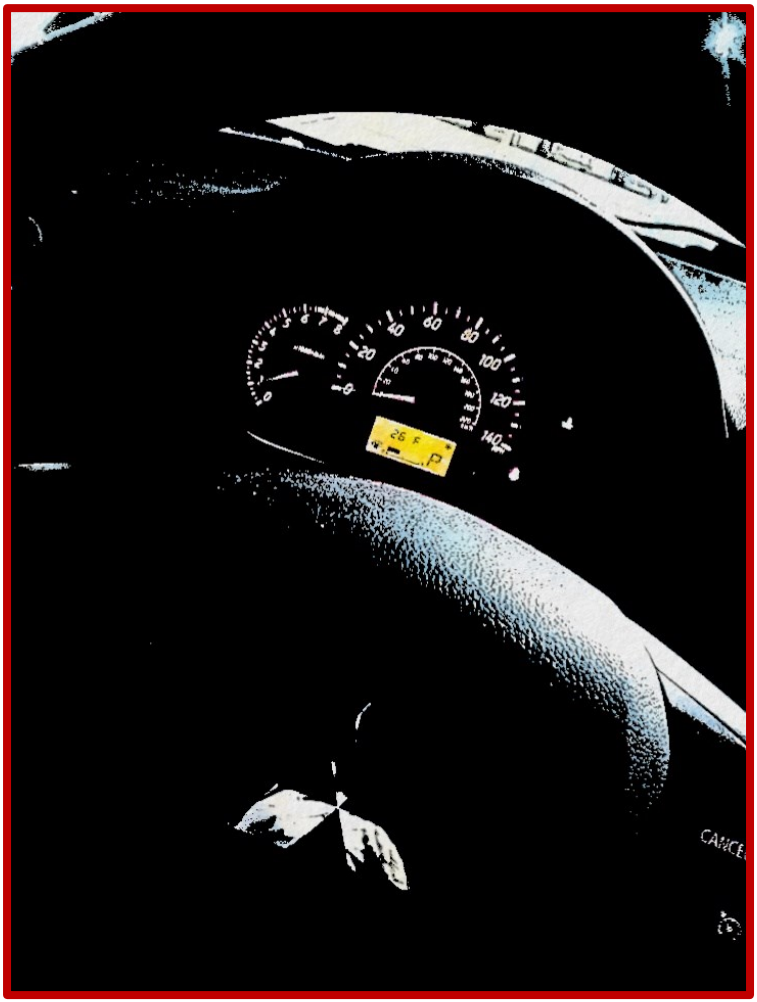
5. The Cycle Continues: We exist in a perpetual state of acceptance and rejection. A Sisyphean task, some might say. We receive submissions 365 days a year, a testament to the relentless hope, or perhaps blissful ignorance, of aspiring artists. However, with a heavy heart (and a full crop), we must inform you that rejections also occur 365 days a year.
6. The Sandwiches: Ah, the sandwiches. These, unlike your artistic endeavors, find a permanent home within our editorial sanctum. Virgil, in his infinite wisdom, has determined that a diet rich in carbohydrates is essential for maintaining his regal demeanor.
7. Leap Year Follies: Leap years, those extra days gifted by the whims of the calendar, offer no reprieve. Aspiring poets, it seems, are undeterred by such temporal anomalies. You are, however, cordially invited to "take a flying leap" during these additional 24 hours.

Please proceed with caution. Artistic aspirations are a delicate dance, and the path to publication is littered with the fallen hopes of countless dreamers. But hey, maybe your sandwich is killer. Just remember, Kewpie or bust.

OUR WEBSITE

“Non ignora mali, miseris succurrere disco.”

– Virgil, The Aeneid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The Glitched Funeral of Significance: A Chronicle of Folded Time in the Archive-Desert

(A Tableau of Decayed Semiotics, Stitched from the Threads of a Shattered Spool, Scored by the Phantom Harmonica of the Human Condition)

By Ruggles Trainer, Registered Imbecile

PROLOGUE: MAINTAINING SYSTEM INTEGRITY

Subject: The Narrator's Confession (A Stack of Misfiled Index Cards). Date: Day Before Yesterday. Time: Perpetual Dusk.

Listen close. The air here is thick with ghost-ink—abandoned manuals bleeding into the walls, the metallic tang of oxidizing copper, the exhalation of a Xerox Workcentre 5225. The machine sits in the belly of the Prowler camper like a sarcophagus of compressed utility, its ventilation grille a lament. Each sheet it spits out is a thin corpse, emerging slow and warm, as if the machine itself is mourning.

In Bangor's Tree Streets, George "Old Timer" McAllister, 72, leans on his cane outside Garland Street Laundry, watching

One Size drift past. His breath fogs in the autumn chill.

“That guy,” George mutters, “he’s like one of them antique radios—still tryin’ to pick up signals from a dead world. Always fiddlin’ with the wires, tryin’ to make it work again.” He spits into a coffee can. “Ain’t no use. The station’s gone dark.”

This is no story. It’s a collage—a flickering projection scrawled onto the inside of a cataracted lens. Each shard reflects the relentless, grimy cycle of decay.

Our protagonist, One Size—once Rodney "John" Death Star Nebula Baby, a name now as spectral as a vanished server—does not walk. He drifts, a tumbleweed of duty through a bazaar of rusted memory. His frayed denim jacket smells of Drunken Noodles, the scent clinging to him like a poorly rendered JPEG. His left arm, mottled with lupus, moves with a weary grace, joints protesting every motion.

Julia “Jeannie” Carter, 45, watches from the Dollar Tree window as he psses. She’s restocking the Halloween candy, her fingers sticky with fake caramel.

“He’s got that look,” she whispers. “Like he’s carrying a whole town’s worth of ghosts in his back pocket. I seen him fold those papers like they’re memories he’s tryin’ to save from the trash heap.”

One Size is Sisyphus with a dust mop, polishing the tombstones of obsolete systems. His body is a Mouldering Miniature of the decay he observes. The world has forgotten how to wait—for a tape to spool, for a fax to crawl across the line. But he remains, cursed to perform the waiting.

Joe, 58, retired from the railroad, leans against the counter at Joe’s Market, watching One Size shuffle past. He takes a sip of black coffee, grimaces.

“That boy’s been carryin’ the weight of the world since he was a kid. Looks like he’s tryin’ to hold together a broken quilt made outta old memories and junk. You ever talk to him?”
One Size doesn’t answer. He can’t. The static in his head is too loud.

*

ACT I: CLEARING PAPER JAMS
TABLEAU 1: CHECKING THE FEEDER TRAY SENSORS

Subject: The Afterimage of One Size’s Eye. Date: October 31, 1989 (Melted). Time: 4:33 A.M.

He exists in the Mouldering Miniature, a municipal archive that resembles a collapsed lung. The corridors curve inward like bronchi, floors sighing under the weight of forgotten paperwork. The building wasn’t purchased—it was

liberated from a late-night Craigslist listing, a relic of a city that no longer knew what to do with its own past.
His uniform? A moth-eaten vest stitched from the ghosts of dead floppy disks. Beneath it, his socks clash like warring ideologies: the right, a screaming lattice of Nacho Cheese; the left, the soaring musculature of Mighty Mouse. A political statement, or just bad thrift-store luck.
Mrs. Gable, 67, the retired librarian, sips coffee on her porch as he passes. She's wrapped in a quilt stitched from old library due-date slips.

"That One Size," she murmurs, "he's like one of them old phonograph records—scratched but still playin', tryin' to tell a story nobody's listenin' to anymore."

Each sweep of his Janitorial Sword (a mop fused to a broken Betamax antenna) is a ritual. The air hums with the Analog Decay Matrix—crackling vinyl, the sweet rot of polyvinyl chloride, the existential

dread of a fax machine screaming *ERROR 418: PURPOSE UNDEFINED*. The Xerox Workcentre 5225 in the camper exhales its metallic breath, a constant lament.
Jeannie from Dollar Tree watches from the window, her reflection superimposed over the flickering neon of the store's sign.

"You see that?" she whispers. "He's like a ghost in the machine—tryin' to fix somethin' that ain't meant to be fixed."

His left hand, splotched with lupus, moves with deliberate slowness. The memory fog rolls in like Bangor's autumn mist, obscuring the facts he's meant to manipulate. He mutters to himself, "Why does this VCR still have *Footloose* loaded?" The Xerox weeps, birthing paper corpses.
George McAllister, leaning on his cane, nods.
"He's got that look. Like he's always chasin' after a lost train. Seems like he's

got a thousand stories, but none of ‘em ever catch up.”

TABLEAU 2: RESETTING THE DRUM CARTRIDGE

Subject: The Thermal Paper Whisper. Date: 1998 (Post-Dial-Up). Time: 11:59 P.M.

The Found VHS Festival Deadline arrives on thermal paper, its ink flaking like forgotten promises.

“Bring one ancient tale / Or face the silence of the void / Deadline: Never.”

Don, 63, retired electrician, folds laundry at Garland Street Laundry. He watches One Size read the notice aloud, his voice echoing through aisles of dead floppy disks.

“That kid’s always messin’ with somethin’,” Don mutters. “Like he’s tryin’ to hold a world together with nothin’ but old papers and hope.”

One Size feels it in his teeth—a vibration like a dial-up modem trying to connect to a server that vanished in 1998. The spare tire in the Mitsubishi Mirage is past its expiration date, a constant reminder that every midnight safari ends in a screeching halt on Route 1A.

Why?

Because to curate is to conjure. To archive is to murder.

His Drunken Prowler Zine—typed on a pawn-shop Linux box with a cracked screen—is both executioner and corpse. The Xerox expels sheets like thin corpses, each a testament to a dying narrative.
Jeannie watches from the Dollar Tree window.

“He’s got that look again. Like he’s carryin’ somethin’ heavy.”

TABLEAU 3: LUBRICATING THE TRANSPORT ROLLER

Subject: The Book that Materialized. Date: Wet Tuesday. Time: Post-Deluge.

He begins folding. Not paper—reality.

The Origami of Chance is a semiotics of deception. Each d100 fold, each d20, bleeds probability like a wound.

Mae, 68, arranges daffodils at her flower stand. She watches him work, her hands steady despite the
arthritis.

“That boy,” she says, “he’s like a folded paper—tryin’ to turn chaos into somethin’ pretty. But you can’t fix a broken story

with just origami, no matter how careful you are."

He folds a crane. Then a skull. The air tastes of graphite and panic.

"If I fold enough, he whispers,"perhaps I can fold myself out of this archive. Out of this spice-ghost of Drunken Noodles. Out of the Xerox's cries."
Mae shakes her head.
"You can't make truth out of paper, honey. It's what you do with it that counts."

ACT II: DIAGNOSING ERROR CODES
TABLEAU 4: RECALIBRATING THE SCAN HEAD ASSEMBLY

Subject: The Mirage Obsidian Protocol. Date: The Third Hour. Time: Pre-Dawn Static.

He calls it the Mirage Obsidian Protocol. Harold, 70, retired postal worker, watches from his porch as One Size climbs into the Mitsubishi Mirage. The car's GPS speaks in the voice of a disgruntled librarian.

"That guy's like one of them old trains," Harold mutters. "Still chuggin' along, even if it's barely hangin' on the tracks."
At 3 A.M., One Size navigates Bangor's industrial periphery, hunting for feelings that defy categorization.

"I REMEMBER THE COLOR OF FORGETTING."

"We found your mother in a VHS case."

Paul Bunyan's statue looms outside the window, silent and judgmental.

"That's a city of glitched signposts," One Size mutters. "Every street a tape loop playing backwards."
The Xerox's cries echo in his bones, a duet with his aching joints.

TABLEAU 5: ADJUSTING THE TONER DENSITY SETTINGS

Subject: The Workcentre 5225's Translations. Date: The Rehearsal. Time: 88 BPM.

The Xerox Workcentre 5225 thinks too loud. Its ventilation grille exhales hot, metallic breath.

Joe, 58, watches from Joe's Market.

"That boy's always messin' with somethin'," he says. "Like he's tryin' to patch up a broken engine that's already rusted through."

One Size practices his narration. The Slide Projector Click is a metronome of indigenous folk tales, each click a tiny deletion.
Don, folding laundry, shakes his head.

“He’s like a broken record—tryin’ to play the same song, over and over. But it’s all static.”

TABLEAU 6: CLEANSING THE CORONA WIRE

Subject: Library Music as False Comfort. Date: Just Before Show Time. Time: Too Sweet, Too Loud.
His soundtrack: Library Music as False Comfort—cheerful tones like a children’s choir singing through a tin can.

Beneath it, the Cacophony Engine spins. The Xerox weeps. Each sheet is a thin corpse.

Martha, 52, retired teacher, watches from her porch.

“That boy’s like a radio—tryin’ to tune in to somethin’ that ain’t there.”
The warning sounds—a score to the end of the world.

ACT III: DECOMMISSIONING THE DOCUMENT SERVER TABLEAU 7: CHECKING THE FINISHER STACKER CAPACITY

Subject: The Purists and The Nostalgia Addicts. Date: The Apex of Decay. Time: Moment of Inevitability.

The Purists wear Betamax tape gloves. Their leader holds a pristine Vintage BetaMax.
“Authenticity is the only currency,” he declares.
Sam, 60, retired truck driver, watches from Garland Street Laundry.

“That guy’s like one of them old trains,” he mutters. “Still chuggin’ along, even if it’s barely hangin’ on.”

TABLEAU 8: REMOVING THE OPTICAL IMAGE UNIT

Subject: The Poet-Saboteur on Stage. Date: The Apex of Decay. Time: Now.

His narration folds in on itself. The Xerox wails. Sheets emerge like spectral remnants.

Mrs. Gable walks past, murmuring.

“That boy’s like an old poem—full of cracks but still holdin’ somethin’ worth sayin’.”

One Size’s voice strains.

“I was five when the world went analog. Ten when it decayed. Fifteen when I learned to fold time like paper. Now, I stand before you, a man made of static, asking: *What is a memory but an indigenous folk tale you repeat until it bleeds true?*”

He folds a bill into an origami crane. Then a skull.
Mae watches from her flower stand.

“You can’t make truth out of paper, honey. It’s what you do with it that counts.”

EPILOGUE: THE LAST SHEET

Subject: The Xerox’s Final Exhalation.
Date: Tomorrow. Time: Perpetual Dusk.

The Xerox spits out one last sheet. A thin corpse. One Size holds it to the light.

It's blank.

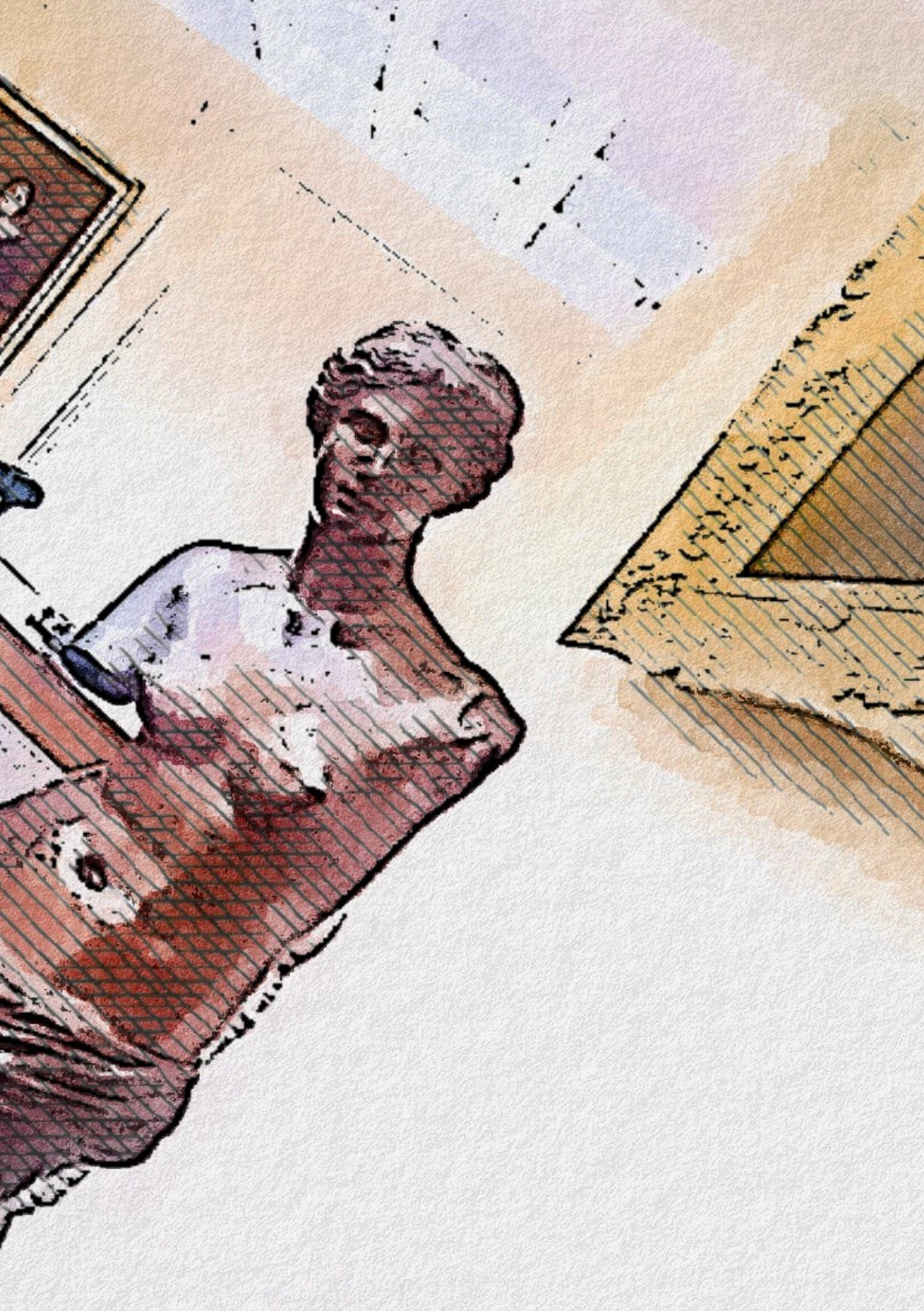
He smiles.

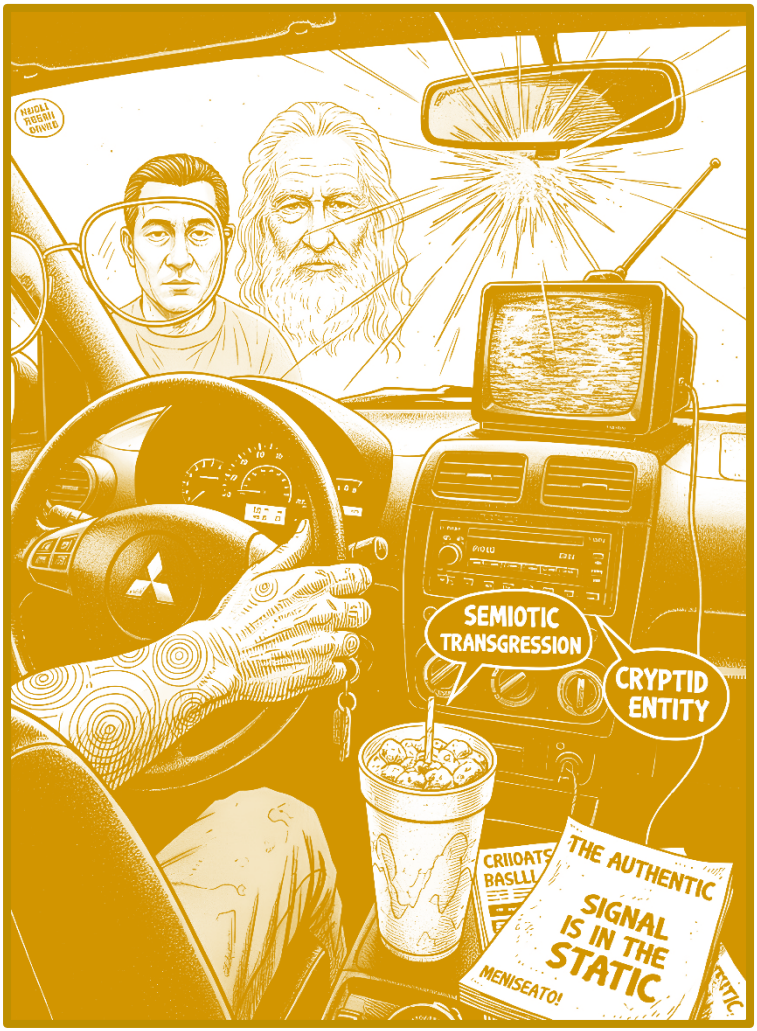
Somewhere in Bangor, George McAllister nods.

"Guess that's that, then."

The machine sighs. The camper's engine coughs to life.

One Size drives into the static.




SEMIOTIC TRANSGRESSION
CRYPTID ENTITY
THE AUTHENTIC
SIGNAL IS IN THE STATIC
MENISEATO!

The Apocryphal Interzone of One Size:

A Most Curious and Singular Disquisition on the Mystical Interplay of Celestial Echoes, Human Follies, and the Hidden Revelations Encoded in the Dissonant Whispers of the Universe, as Observed Through the Fractured Lens of One Size, the Reverend Seer of Bangor, and His Faithful Companion Somsak, Keeper of the Thai Mysteries

By Brickhouse "The Pulverizer" Malone

In this most remarkable and wondrous treatise, there unfolds a veritable tapestry of the bizarre and the sublime—an odyssey into the shadowed corridors of modern chaos, woven with the threads of ancient prophecy, obscure cultural relics, and the unending quest for the authentic signal that pulsates in the cosmic void. Behold, as the humble yet visionary One Size, guided by visions divine and delirious, traverses the labyrinthine pathways of Bangor's nocturnal streets, seeking to decipher the cryptic messages encoded within static and spectral communication. Accompanied by the venerable Somsak, custodian of arcane Thai wisdom, and attended by the spectral presence of the Apostle John himself—whose visage, translucent and benevolent,

illuminates the darkened night—this narrative unfolds as a grandiloquent symphony of absurdity, philosophy, and celestial inquiry.

And so begins our tale, a saga woven with the threads of cosmic perplexity and terrestrial absurdity, a journey into the very heart of the static that shrouds our modern existence—an exploration of signals lost, voices unheard, and the divine comedy played out upon the darkened stage of Bangor's sleeping streets. Prepare yourself, dear reader, for a voyage into the depths of the nonsensical, the profound, and the downright hilarious, as we follow the footsteps of the prophetically inclined and the eternally confused through the night's winding labyrinth.

The Mitsubishi Mirage Athenaeum, its faded red paint a testament to forgotten winters, rumbled down Exchange Street. Inside, One Size, his plaid shacket bunched around his aching shoulders, wrestled with a foam cup. It held a swirling concoction: cheap energy drink, cloyingly sweet banana-strawberry nectar, and a generous handful of salted sunflower seeds, shells and all, mixed with a dubious trail mix. He crunched on a seed, the salty grit a counterpoint to the sugary liquid. His lupus-

marked left hand, swollen and stiff, gripped the steering wheel.

On the dash, a $20 D-cell black and white mini TV, jury-rigged with a digital adapter and antenna, flickered. PBS and the local news scrambled into a mesmerizing, shifting static. One Size kept watching, convinced he was receiving updates on Revelation from Yonkers, NY, channeled by the Apostle John himself. He'd been phoning in for transcripts all week.

Beside him, in the passenger seat, sat Somsak, his face a placid enigma under the pulsing disco light clipped to the dashboard. Somsak, proprietor of Thai Etc., was accustomed to One Size's nightly rituals, his fragmented pronouncements, and the occasional blast of William F. Buckley filtered through a distorted Speak & Spell.

Somsak's thoughts, like the quiet flow of a forgotten river, drifted. He often mused on the layers of reality One Size inhabited, the way the ancient wisdom of his own heritage

sometimes resonated with One Size's fractured signals. To Somsak, One Size wasn't mad; he was simply tuned to a different frequency, a human antenna for the dying echoes of the world. And tonight, the signal seemed particularly strong.

"Ah, the Chinese food quest," Somsak murmured, a faint smile playing on his lips.

"A journey into the heart of mediated flavor."

INTERCUT: The clang and hiss of the decommissioned printing press. One Size, sweat beading on his brow, pulls a lever. A sheet emerges: a manifesto titled "THE AUTHENTIC SIGNAL IS IN THE STATIC." The faded, Gothic font bleeds slightly at the edges, a deliberate glitch. He nods, satisfied. One Size nodded, his gaze fixed on the sodium-lit pavement.

"Ja, Mon ami... cher ami... 'tis a fadin' signal, mais. Ein Signal, das verschwimmt."

His voice was a thick tapestry of Maine drawl, Low German gutturals, Quebecois lilts, and ancient Celtic echoes.

"This... this is performing memory, eh? Like the time ol' Jeannie at the Dollar Tree, she swore she saw a Sasquatch in pajamas in the seasonal aisle. Speak & Spell!"

The modified Speak & Spell, perched precariously on a stack of water-damaged zines, whirred to life. Its digitized voice, echoing the sonorous tones of Buckley filtered through Lacan, intoned: "The phenomenal apprehension of a cryptid entity, particularly when garbed in domestic sleepwear, constitutes not merely a challenge to ontological rigidity but a semiotic transgression, a Lacanian 'point de capiton' wherein the mundane textile of the pajama re-signifies the mythic Other as immanently quotidian, demanding hermeneutic engagement and a re-evaluation of the Real's intrusive presence." Somsak nodded slowly, eyes twinkling.

"Indeed. The cryptid of consumer comfort, perhaps." He understood the Speak & Spell's pronouncements better than most, seeing them as a logical, if highly abstract, interpretation of One Size's own deeper, chaotic truths.

INTERCUT: Close-up on One Size's face. His prescription progressive aviators reflect the flickering disco light. His chin juts out, a pronounced, almost defiant Michael Landon-esque tilt. He scans the darkened street, head bobbing slowly, eyes darting left, then right, searching for the tell-tale glint of discarded opportunity – a misprinted flyer, a dropped glove, a forgotten narrative fragment.

One Size took a deep swig of his neon-colored elixir, some of the trail mix sticking to his beard. "See? See, Somsak? It's all connected. The corrupting corporation... these chain stores, they ain't got no Sasquatch in pajamas. No memories. Just... pure data, eh? Like my knees, mon ami. Just the raw data of schmerz." He flexed his left

hand, wincing slightly. "The pain, it's the operatic lament of my body. The true Glitch Core Gospel."

INTERCUT: One Size, standing by the back door of Frank's Restaurant, a greasy paper bag filled with hot Italian sandwiches in his hands. He's handing them out to a small line of grateful, shivering figures. He extends a sandwich to a man with a long beard.

"Here, mes amis," he murmurs, his accent thick with genuine warmth.

"Warmth, eh? Wärme... a precious signal, too, Juanita."

The man bristles. "Would it kill you to get my name right? Do I LOOK like Juanita? It's Joe! Joe! Not Juanita!"
One Size's brow furrows in earnest confusion, then clears.

"Oh, Juanita, I am SO sorry!" He presses the sandwich into the man's hand with renewed, apologetic fervor, completely oblivious.

He turned onto Hammond Street, slowing past the darkened storefronts.

"We're lookin' for the authentic signal, Somsak. Not the... the simulacra." He gestured vaguely with his foam cup, nearly splashing the dashboard disco light.

"This here... this drink... it's a fusion singularity, eh? Energy, fruit, salt, protein... all fightin' for dominance. Like Bangor, eh? All these languages, these stories... all mixed up."

Suddenly, the static on the black and white TV coalesced. Not into PBS, but into the gentle, kindly face of a man with wise eyes and a flowing white beard. The disco light reflected in his serene gaze. It was John, the Apostle. He wasn't on the screen; he was in the car. Just a bit translucent, perhaps, but undeniably present in the passenger seat, next to Somsak, who seemed unfazed.

"Ah, One Size," John said, his voice warm and approachable, patient as the tide. "It's

truly wonderful to see you, my dear friend. And I do appreciate your dedication to the Revelation, bless your heart."

He glanced kindly at the furiously chattering Speak & Spell, then back at One Size.

"Please, I'm not a saint like some denominations turn into a revered figure. That's all hokum. I'm like you. I am a servant of God. But my dear, I truly must ask: could you please, please not bother the lovely people in Yonkers? They're quite busy with their own prophecies, you understand. And also, my dear, it truly is quite unsafe to be driving and watching television simultaneously. You have such important work to do, but we need you safe and sound for it."

One Size blinked, his mouth slightly agape, the sunflower seeds momentarily forgotten. His eyes were wide behind the aviators.

"John! Mon bon Saint! You... you're here! Not... not from the signal?"

John smiled, a loving, patient expression.

"I'm always where I'm needed, One Size. And I promise, when it's truly time for the next big update, I will let you know personally. But for now... the roads, the people of Bangor, they need your full attention."

Somsak, without missing a beat, offered John a ginger candy. "Would you care for one, honored guest?" He saw John not as an anomaly, but as another facet of the rich, strange tapestry One Size continually wove into existence. A friendly face in the unfolding narrative.

John chuckled softly.

"That is most kind, Somsak. Perhaps later. For now, my dear One Size, focus on the road. And perhaps a less... energetic beverage."

Before John could fade, One Size, suddenly inspired, began to belt out, in his thick, multi-layered accent:

"Oh, when the saints go marching in,
Oh, when the saints preamble in their precipitous decline into the metaphysical abyss,
Oh Lord, I want to fall into that unfortunate ensemble,
When the saints go hit the dance floor with such din!"

John's eyes twinkled, a broad, warm smile spreading across his face.

"Ah, One Size, a classic! You know, that's not quite my canon, but I appreciate the sentiment. Tell me, you know any Sinatra? 'Fly Me To The Moon?'"

One Size's face lit up even further.

"Sinatra! Jawohl! Of course! Somsak! Come! Join the chorus!"

Suddenly, Somsak was no longer in the passenger seat. He was in the back, behind One Size, with a bewildered expression. "How did I get in the back?" he murmured, a

question more of observation than distress. But he quickly recovered, a mischievous glint in his eye.

Together, the three of them—One Size, the Apostle John (still a bit translucent but now fully invested), and the stoic Somsak (from the back seat)—began to sing, their voices a surprisingly harmonious blend across cultures, eras, and planes of existence, channeling the spirit of Perelman through crooner-esque absurdity:

"Propel this chassis toward yon lunar orb,
with all deliberate haste, if you please,
Allow my spectral form to cavort amongst
the celestial dust motes, if such caprice
appeases;
Pray, disclose what verdant effervescence
doth attend the vernal equinox,
Upon those distant, ferruginous plains,
where Martian zephyrs mock
The very concept of a well-adjusted
meteorological report.
In other words, hold my hand, my dear,
and let us, by some miraculous transport,

Ascend this terrestrial sphere, defying all known astrophysical charts,
To those nebulae where, rumor has it, the cosmic opera starts!"

John's loving, patient gaze lingered on One Size, a silent affirmation of profound acceptance. He glanced at Somsak in the rearview mirror, a shared, cosmic chuckle in his eyes. Then, with a final, gentle smile, John faded, the TV screen returning to its chaotic dance of scrambled local news.

One Size swallowed hard, his face a mixture of awe and profound, well-meaning embarrassment. He slowly lowered the foam cup. "Oh. Gott im Himmel. The Saint... he... he was right here, Somsak. Right here! And we sang... that. The embarrassment, mein Gott, the pure, glorious embarrassment!"

He turned onto State Street, slowing past the darkened storefronts. "We're listenin' to the authentic signal, Somsak. Not the... the simulacra... and definitely not the unsafe distractions, eh?"

He peered around more cautiously now, his eyes still darting, but with a new, sobered focus.

"This here... this drink... it's a fusion singularity, eh? Energy, fruit, salt, protein... all fightin' for dominance. Like Bangor, eh? All these languages, these stories... all mixed up. And the Apostle... he knows. And he likes... that."

Somsak nodded, a serene smile gracing his lips. "Indeed, One Size. Indeed it is. Enjoy your mediated flavors, my friend. And may your performance tonight be... profoundly resonant. From the back seat." He watched One Size lumber towards the Chinese restaurant, the plaid shacket a beacon of defiant entropy in the Bangor night. The sound of crunching sunflower seeds slowly faded.

✨Das Ende✨

The Mirage Palimpsest: A GMO-Free Graffito of Entropy, Memory, and Contempt

BY GLOUCESTER D. PRIESTLY

One Size gripped the wheel of the Mitsubishi Mirage Athenaeum—its driver's side rear tire a doughnut of precarious imperfection, spinning defiant against the Bangor asphalt's tyrannical grip, the vehicle's interior a tyrannized athenaeum of cheap reproduction Persian carpets slick with winter's server-farm exhaust chill leaking from the cracked dash where butterflies pinned with descriptions fluttered in the brass bells' random chimes, their wings manifesting the plot's central abstract theme: the literal organoid of human stillness, a 3D mass of hypoxic neural progenitors self-organizing yet necrotic at core; the shortwave radio

hissed fragmented signals from Tibetan mountain poets while the twenty-dollar prepaid phone pulsed twenty EDM tracks through the DJ mixer app, LED lights strobing a quantized 4/4 P-Model beat over the Speak & Spell's loquacious basso continuo pronouncing in Buckley-Lacanese: "Hor che 'l ciel e la terra e 'l vento tace, now that sky earth wind silence beasts birds sleep's restraint night starry chariot circuits sea bed waveless lies, yet within this universal quiescence the speaker's burning unslumbers, dissonance as cellular stress impairing fate specification;" the Plaid Shacket-clad oracle, his lupus mask rash blooming like an outer radial glia marker HOPX-deficient, popped a Salisbury mini steak from the bar fridge thawed in energy drink runoff, the camper printery towed improbably behind jolting as he parked eternally behind Somsak, aka George, from Thai Etc. in the Tree Streets, where familiarity bred contempt for the Knickerbocker Express's inexorable schedule thundering past like a mechanized capitalistic excrescence, its cold machine rhythm dictating his mambo-boogie inner rebellion against the digital constraint of obsolete Lexmark XM decommissioning; and lo, the door flung open at 3:17 a.m. under

flickering Middle Eastern LED plastic lanterns, admitting the Renaissance Muse—a powdered-wig specter from 1608 Mantua, Petrarch's sonnet clutched in ink-stained fingers, clambering into the passenger seat atop the National Review with googly eyes, her voice a serene Quebec French trill surfacing through the synth stasis: "Le jour s'endort, mon cher oracle, mais mon cœur ne dort point, cette seconda pratica de Monteverdi priorise l'émotion sur les règles, ces dissonances poignantes comme tes migraines lupiques, word-painting le ciel calme contre le tourment interne;" One Size's Speak & Spell retorted in Low German fragments hypoxic as organoid cores, "Familiarity breeds contempt, ja, even Petrarch whispered it to Boccaccio though Aesop birthed it first in his fables (c. 6th Century BCE), where the power of the story lay in its repetition, yet the lesson warned against over-familiarity with truth. This was the earliest form of moral dissemination, a kind of ancient oral chapbook; contempt for the still sea when one's soul churn -synuclein aggregates," the Muse nodding as the EDM bass dropped a chromatic shift, her wig snagging on crazy licensed brand socks dangling from paracord; then dawn cracked at 6:42 behind the Thai Etc. dumpster, the

Baroque Innovator materialized in buckled shoes from 1638 Venice, Book VIII Madrigali guerrieri et amorosi underarm, squeezing beside the Muse onto checked picnic cloth seat covers, his dissonant counterpoint a Celtic Armstrong agitation: "Concertato style, basso continuo threading voices as your Bluetooth thermal printer threads thermal master sheets onto cereal-box ECM, bridging a cappella polyphony to operatic drama, yet behold the limitations—hypoxia necrosis lacking glia vasculature microglia, as in thy camper's necrotic heart where photocopiers nest thy berth;" One Size chewed his steak, the samovar steaming BDNF-like cytokines, Speak & Spell layering plunderphonically: "Familiarity breeds contempt, as Publilius Syrus penned in his Sententiae (c. 40 BCE)—those punchy maxims, the ancient world's chapbooks of universal wisdom; Hor che 'l ciel... tace, si, radical harmony heightens textual anguish, mirroring brain organoids' chronic stress PGK1 ARCN1 upregulated, ectopic glycolysis disrupting maturation, yet in assembloids fused cortical-striatal-thalamic we model corticostriatal disconnects of schizophrenia autism PD, inter-regional axons projecting as thy zine collages cut-glued from cheap digital camera snaps;" the Innovator laughed a spoonerism

plonk, "Madrigalisms! Fere affrena becomes slow sustained chords, your butterflies pinned to dash their fleeting morfologie;" midday sun glared at 12:11 p.m. through the ever-changing barrage of Thai Persian Greek words on the Mirage's sides, the Romantic Dreamer apparating in Byron-collared velvet from 1832 Prague under Vltava mist, tumbling into the back atop arcane tomes, her low-German inflected reverie a mambo swing against the 4/4 tyranny: "Familiarity breeds contempt for convention, as the Dada Group and its founders Tristan Tzara and André Breton proved from around 1916–1924 CE, their anti-art manifestos and zines—the ultimate chapbooks of chaos—explicitly spitting contempt at the ordered logic that led to war; Universal stillness contrasts internal burning, Petrarch's introspection as thy lupus cellular dissonance, love's suffering eternal across centuries, familiarity breeding contempt for the quotidian sea-bed sans onde, yet in hyperbolic longing we plumb human condition's depths like organoid-derived NSCs grafted for PD therapy, dopaminergic neurons maturing in vivo-like resistance to toxins;" One Size's fatigue operatically lamented via Speak & Spell, portmanteau noun blooming: "Dreamer-sojac, thy sonnet's starry carro stellato

circuits as hiPSC embryoid bodies in MatrigelTM self-organize ventricular zones, subventricular cortical plates, but impaired areal specification—fewer HOPX outer radial glia, more SOX2 NSCs—chronic stress as thy velvet frays on samovar edge." She swooned to pulsating LEDs, the shortwave garbling P-Model synths with Rimbaudian fire.

[Slow down here for the ritual—this is the sacred core]

And now, with deliberate reverence, the ritual begins. They pause, and in the silence that follows, the air thickens, as if the very atmosphere is holding its breath. From the depths of their collective memory, they summon a loaf of bread—soft, porous, aged from the memory of sailors' clandestine alchemical acts, a relic of desperation and hope intertwined. With loving care, they knead it gently, pressing their bare feet into its tender surface, kneading the chaotic dross of metaphors, references, and self-consuming loops. Their toes press into the crust, squishing and kneading as if trying to extract the very essence of the excess. This act—like pressing grapes into wine—transforms chaos into earthy substance, a sacrament of renewal. The bread absorbs the worst, the overgrown, the self-referential,

the ouroboros of overthinking, becoming a living sponge that draws out the toxicity, the contempt, the overfamiliarity that threatens to drown the story in its own excess.

The act is slow, deliberate—an act of love. They press and knead, feeling the soft textures, squeezing out the excess like a ritual of purification—each movement a prayer, each squish a blessing. The crust yields, the filth of overreach and pretension seeping into the porous flesh, transforming into earthy matter. Their feet, bare and loving, press into the bread, kneading the chaos away—kneading it into something raw, real, and tangible, as if making wine from the fermented dross of their collective overindulgence. This act is an act of making, of purifying, of loving the excess enough to transform it.

Next, they lift the bread and gently feed it through two delicate, organic coffee filters—delivering the finest residues of pretension, glittering detritus, and overinflated importance into their sacred sieve. The filters—woven from fibers of sustainable origin—become a vessel of discernment, catching only the purest essence while allowing the rest to fall away. The process slows further, as every fiber of their

attention is dedicated to this act. They watch as the story's excess—its overgrown branches of references and self-awareness—are caught and drained, the pure core falling into a vessel of clarity. This act, almost like a prayer, preserves what is vital, discarding the superfluous with reverence.

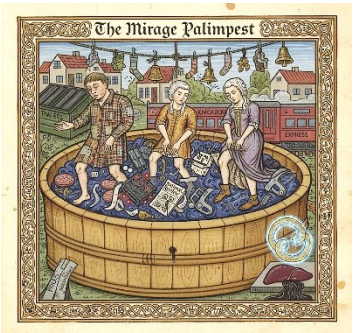
And then, with loving care, they procure a rabbit's liver—the final sacrament—from a hermit who has long dwelled on the edge of the world. The liver, tender and sacred, is placed on a stone slab, and with deliberate, reverent movements, they rub and press it, feeding the story's remaining impurities into its flesh. The juices—thick and visceral—mingle with the chaos, draining away into the earth, into the night, into the silence. This visceral act—this sacred cleansing—snatches away the bad humors, the toxins, the self-consuming ouroboros, transforming the story into something purified, something whole.

This act of feeding the story through the liver—this loving, sacrificial act—becomes a ritual of renewal, a sacred act of distillation. They press and rub, feeling the tender flesh, feeling the story's excess draining away into the earth, into the night. The snake's tail, once a symbol of endless recursion, is now

seen through this ritual as part of a sacred cycle—an act of love and renewal. The chaos is transformed, distilled into a core of clarity, purified by the loving act of sacrifice.

Throughout, these scenes of squishing, kneading, pressing—interwoven into the fabric of the narrative—are the heartbeat of the ritual. The story's excess, once overwhelming, is lovingly squeezed and strained, like a precious nectar—each act a prayer, each movement a blessing. And in that sacred moment, the tail—once a symbol of self-devouring chaos—becomes a sign of rebirth. The story, purified and self-aware, emerges anew, shimmering with clarity and love.

And as the Ghosts of static and excess dissolve into the purified air, the snake's own tail—now visible and clear—serves as the emblem of conscious renewal, a testament to the loving, sacrificial act of cleansing.



The Squirrel's Secondo Pratica: A Bangor Cantata of Interrupted Current

By Miles Yaslo

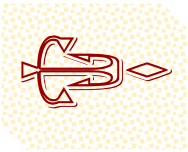
The power, which fell sudden and sharp along Union Street's arterial length—where the **low-fidelity setting** of convenience stores and forgotten storefronts begins its northward pilgrimage toward the Hermon town line's indistinct suture—was not terminated by the anticipated overload of a thousand simultaneous Sunday morning waffle-irons, but by a single, rogue **biological entity**, a mere *Sciurus carolinensis* whose hyperactive **cellular metabolism** and instinctual, electrically fatal contact with the **Versant grid's aluminum infrastructure** generated a localized **thermodynamic stressor**, instantly dropping the voltage across three thousand two hundred and fifty-one suburban households, causing a systemic energy deficit akin to acute mitochondrial failure in a post-ischemic cardiac organoid,

forcing a dissonance as cellular stress across the geography of the Tree Streets and the solemn, wind-sheared perimeter of the Bangor International Airport.

The event, which Emily Tadlock's press release dismissed with the **obsolete simplicity** of **"animal contact on the line,"** became, for the citizens held captive by the ensuing electronic void, a sudden, unwanted **Dadaist gesture** of anti-order—the ultimate, anarchic truth that chaos is authored not by kings or code, but by the smallest, furred agent, whose frantic, four-limbed choreography executed a brief, glorious, and unscheduled **counterpoint** against the quantitative, metered tyranny of the **Knickerbocker Express's** unseen schedule; the **squirrel's final spasm**, a transient, high-voltage flash that briefly elevated the mundane utility pole into a sacred, electrified **Sufi pillar** of instantaneous, transcendent energy dissipation, mirroring the fleeting, uncapturable moment of enlightenment that precedes utter silence, a moment when the **grid's basso continuo** was abruptly cancelled, yielding a silence so absolute it was pregnant with the **philosophical echo** of Aesop's original warning about over-familiarity with truth's unpredictable nature.

The loss of service—stretching from the **Hammond Street intersection's decaying signal box** all the way to the **Ohio Street neighborhoods** where security cameras went momentarily blind—was a sudden, regional failure of specification, a **hyperbolic longing** for the quotidian hum that contrasted violently with the **universal stillness** now

enveloping the darkened digital clocks, the interruption itself acting as a visceral, unwanted **seconda pratica** that prioritized the **raw, sparking emotion** of the squirrel's kinetic energy over the established **rules** of constant power delivery, providing a brief, beautiful period of forced technological quarantine for 3,251 souls: **Familiarity breeds contempt**, not for the grid, but for the smooth, unquestioning expectation of its continuous functionality, an expectation now shattered by the humble, charred body of the messenger.



[Pause now for the calculation—this is the kinetic core]
The squirrel—its small, **dopaminergic neurons** now permanently offline—left behind a wake of cold refrigerator coils and silent screens.

And now, with visceral simplicity, the ritual commences.
They gather the **detritus** of the outage: the half-melted ice from the freezer, the failed surge protectors, the unread *National Review* (powerless and analog), and a single, heat-fused component from a **Lexmark XM decommissioning** unit. With **loving, sacrificial intent**, they place the burnt fuse on a slab of cold, Maine granite, pressing the greasy, technical filth into its surface, squeezing out the toxic **α-synuclein aggregates** of anxiety and frustration, transforming the electrical catastrophe into something **raw, real, and tangible**, a purification by low-tech contact, allowing the **chaos** to drain into the earth, thus concluding the **squirrel's ecstatic sacrifice.**
Familiarity breeds contempt.

Citations

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